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UNCLAS ANKARA 007034

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HHS FOR WSTEIGER/PBUDASHEWITZ  
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GENEVA PASS HEALTH ATTACHE

E.O. 12958:N/A

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SUBJECT: Avian Influenza Situation Update in Turkey

Ref: (A) Ankara 5119 (B) Ankara 6105 (C) Ankara 6138  
(D) Ankara 6232 (E) Ankara 6291 (F) Ankara 6430  
(G) Ankara 6514 (H) Ankara 6605

1. (U) Summary. There have been no new outbreaks of Avian Influenza (AI) in Turkey since the October outbreak. According to reports, the Government of Turkey (GOT) has been testing for AI in the case of any suspicious bird deaths. Poultry consumption has steadily risen but is still well below pre-outbreak levels. End summary.

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No New AI Cases, Testing Continues  
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2. (U) Although there have been no new reported cases of AI since the October outbreak the GOT continues to test for any signs of the virus in the region. The strict quarantine has been lifted although the GOT will maintain surveillance in the region for some time.

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Reports of Other Bird Deaths  
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3. (U) The GOT seems to be maintaining good surveillance of any suspicious bird deaths. Reports indicated bird deaths in Inegol near Bursa, Cankiri near Ankara and Fununlu near Izmir. AI was not detected in any of these cases. However, in Inegol, Newcastle disease was confirmed and over 900 birds were destroyed. Newcastle is suspected in Furunlu but tests are ongoing. Neither AI nor Newcastle has been detected in Cankiri. Note. We take it as a very positive sign that farmers and the GOT continue to monitor and report on any suspicious deaths. End note.

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New Compensation Fund  
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4. (U) Compensation of farmers for any culling of birds remains a incentive for continued reporting especially on smaller farms. A new association has been formed called "Healthy Chicken Information Platform." It consists of 18 chicken producers. This group developed the compensation fund of 100,000 YTL for the farmers who were affected by the October AI outbreak. Industry sources report that current Turkish laws prohibit the GOT from paying compensation to farmers. However, the GOT may seek to change this law in the upcoming budget.

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EU Lifts Ban on Turkish Poultry Products  
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5. (U) EU has lifted the ban for imports of poultry feathers from Turkey. However, poultry meat exports are not approved although the ban is not connected to AI. Turkey has been seeking permission to export poultry meat to the European Union for a number of years but has been denied access due to Turkey's restrictions on EU beef imports.

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Demand Recovering from Still Down  
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6. (U) Broiler meat demand has improved since the outbreak but is still only 50 percent of demand. Because of the production cycle, poultry companies were not been able to reduce production immediately. Most companies stored meat in freezers rather than selling at a loss, but storage facilities are currently full. Egg demand is now 60 percent of normal.

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